FROM THE LAST MAFIOSO BY DEMARIS

investigator in Washington. Among his clients were Attorneys Edward Bennett Williams and his associate Tom Wadden and, of course, Maheu.

Accompanied by Jimmy Cantillon, Roselli went back East. When Roselli told Shimon that Barron and the agent with him had assured him they were the only ones who knew about it and would protect him as long as he cooperated, Shimon's response was, "Horseshit. Those guys are lying to you. There's no solo flights in the FBI. Don't believe them. By now lots of people in the Bureau know about it."

After kicking it around for a few hours, they went to see Ed Morgan, who was all in favor of Roselli becoming an informant. Shimon, who was also a close friend of Sam Giancana, a client of Edward Bennett Williams, said, "Forget it. The first guy they want him to inform on is Sam, his best friend. There'd be no end to it." Turning to Roselli, he said, "You wouldn't last twenty minutes." Cantillon agreed with Shimon. "Johnny, they'll never let you off the hook."

Morgan thought that certain parameters could be set up to limit the scope of their demands. "I could help work that out for you. This reminds me of Longy Zwillman. This is confidential but he was my informant. I turned him."

"Oh, that's a swell example," Shimon said. "They hung that stool pigeon."

"Only after he got into tax trouble and started talking to too many people. I don't know of a single informant the FBI ever lost. You'd be given a code number and your identity would be protected."

Roselli cut him short. "Look, Ed, number one, I'm not going to snitch on nobody; number two, I want some way to keep those guys off my back; number three, I want the name of the prick that turned me in."

After leaving Morgan's office, Roselli made arrangements to meet privately with James P. "Big Jim" O'Connell, who had been the CIA Support Chief for Operation Mongoose, the code name for the CIA–Mafia assassination plot against Castro. It was O'Connell, a former FBI agent, who had brought Maheu into the operation. Prior to this contact, the CIA, through Big Jim, had been paying Maheu's rent for a long time for cloak and dagger work in the Caribbean. Roselli also spoke to William King Harvey, his CIA case officer, another former FBI agent, who had manned the Ger-

man desk during World War II, his office just down the hall from Edward P. Morgan's Communist desk.

For a man who valued his privacy, Roselli had decided on a daring move. He asked both CIA men to intercede on his behalf with the FBI. In other words, get them off his back. Roselli was a long way from having the government by the ass, as he had once hoped, but his grip, shaky as it was, had a hold on something with a definite value in that market place. The previous month Big Jim had helped Maheu duck an appearance before a Senate wiretapping investigating committee by merely telling Senator Edward Long not to call Maheu to testify as he had been "involved in CIA operations." In Roselli's case, Big Jim had Security Director Sheffield Edwards, also a member of Mongoose, inform the FBI that Roselli wanted to "keep square with the Bureau" but was afraid that the mob might kill him for talking.

It was unfortunate for Roselli that his request came at a time when J. Edgar Hoover was not speaking to the CIA. Barron kept right on coming, forcing Roselli to make a desperate move.

Ever since President Kennedy's assassination, the news media had abounded with conspiracy theories contrary to the findings of the Warren Commission. The accusing finger was often leveled at the Mafia, particularly at Carlos Marcello and Santo Trafficante, who were quoted as having made threats against the Kennedys because of their tough stance on organized crime. Edward Bennett Williams' client, Jimmy Hoffa, whose conviction was enroute to the Supreme Court, was also high on the list of suspects.

Roselli, who was privy to the innermost secrets of the Cosa Nostra Commission through his intimate relationship with Giancana, knew that the theories were, as he had expressed it to Jimmy, "more fucking bullshit."

In fact, about three weeks after the assassination, Roselli and Jimmy had met at Bill Graham's house. After making them comfortable, Graham had excused himself, and the two men had discussed the CIA–Mafia plot. After having read about Lee Harvey Oswald's contacts with Cuba, Jimmy had suspected Castro as being behind the assassination. What amazed him was that there had been nothing in the newspapers about the CIA–Cosa Nostra plot to kill Castro. But there was a great deal of speculation about the mob doing it. There was even talk of Hoffa being involved, which co

vinced Jimmy, as if he needed any more convincing, that nobody outside of their thing understood anything about its operation. Hoffa was a front, a shell, a tool, a device, but whatever one wanted to call it, he was not a threat to anyone, particularly to the President of the United States.

"You know, Johnny," he had said, "the more of this bullshit I read, the more I'm convinced that we've become fucking scapegoats for every unsolved crime committed in this country. What's this mob the papers are always talking about, for Christ's sake? It's against the fucking rules to kill a cop, so now we're going to kill the President. You know, Jack once told me we should have started clipping cops and Feebees [FBI agents] years ago. Personally, I think he was right."

Roselli sighed. "Jimmy, what're you going to do? I'll bet you any amount of money the CIA never tells the Warren Commission about their little deal with us."

"I hope not, or you'll be dragged right into the middle of this thing. You think maybe Castro is behind the hit?"

"No question in my mind," Roselli said. "But it's got nothing to do with us. I think he hit Kennedy because of the Bay of Pigs invasion. I don't think he's even aware of our deal."

"Why not?" Jimmy asked, puzzled. "You've been at it three, four years. Something's got to leak in that time."

Roselli's blue eyes hardened. "Jimmy, I'm going to tell you something you won't believe." He looked away, the muscles along his jawline tensing into rigid lines. "This whole thing has been a scam. Santo [Trafficante] never did nothing but bullshit everybody. All these fucking wild schemes the CIA dreamed up never got further than Santo. He just sat on it, conned everybody into thinking that guys were risking their lives sneaking into Cuba, having boats shot out from under them, all bullshit."

"Does Sam know this?"

"Yeah, he knows, but what can he do about it. We had an opportunity here that comes once in a lifetime. Could've hid the government by the ass, and the sonovabitch did nothing."

"Did Sam get on Santo's ass?"

"Jimmy, Sam can't do nothing. Santo's a boss like him."

Jimmy looked worried. "I don't like it, Johnny. I told you that before. I think it's fucking dangerous. You're playing with fire."

Roselli shook his head. "All for nothing. What a terrible waste of a lifetime opportunity. Imagine, Jimmy, if we'd knocked off Castro. Think of the power—" he stopped and slapped the arm of his chair. "What's the sense of talking about it."

"Maybe if you had clipped him, Kennedy would still be alive."

"Listen, Jimmy, in this business, you can't win them all."

Considering the importance of what Roselli had told Jimmy, his new plan was a bold and dangerous stroke. Although Maheu, Shimon, and the CIA officials involved knew all there was to know about the conception of the various assassination schemes, none knew anything about the actual execution of any of them beyond what Roselli had reported. Roselli hoped that by exercising his imagination and creating new and dramatic incidents, he could get the FBI off his back.

Years later Joseph Shimon would tell Senator Frank Church's Intelligence Committee that as far as Maheu was concerned it was "Johnny's contract." As for Giancana, Shimon said that the Chicago Mafia boss had told him that "I'm not in it, and they [the CIA] are asking me for the names of some guys who used to work in casinos. . . . Maheu's conning the hell out of the CIA."

This, of course, was well understood by Roselli when he visited the Washington law offices of Welch and Morgan to talk again with Edward P. Morgan. By this time Roselli and Morgan were close personal friends. They'd worked together in the Hughes operation, and Morgan had enjoyed Johnny's hospitality and influence in Las Vegas.

As always on his visits to Washington, Shimon picked Roselli up at the airport. On their way to Morgan's office, Roselli told Shimon, "I'm going to lay it out for him and see what he can do with it. Do you think he knows anything about Mongoose?" Shimon was positive that Maheu had told Morgan everything. Roselli had smiled and said, "Not everything, Joe, you'll see."

Seated across from Morgan's desk, with Shimon at his side, Roselli decided to play it dumb and had so advised Shimon in advance. Assured by Morgan that whatever was said would be protected by the attorney-client privilege, Roselli took it from the top, with Maheu's initial contact at the Beverly Hills Brown Derby Restaurant on September

"What's happening with Washington?" he said, "Are they still after you?"

Roselli chuckled. "They had me up at the Carroll Arms Hotel, Bobby Baker's old stomping ground, for a secret session and I really fixed their fucking wagon. All hot, you know, about who killed Kennedy. Sometimes I'd like to tell them the mob did it, just to see the expression on their stupid faces. You know, we're supposed to be idiots, right? We hire a psycho like Oswald to kill the President and then we get a blabbermouth, two-bit punk like Ruby to shut him up. We wouldn't trust those jerks to hit a fucking dog.

"Anyway, they start questioning me about this bullshit I'd told Morgan years ago. You know, Castro retaliating against Kennedy because of our attempts on his life. I said, 'I have no recollection of receiving or passing on such information.'

"Well, Jimmy," he said, laughing, "it's not my fault if Morgan has a vivid imagination. I've also been dropping by Jack Anderson's office and we're getting pretty chummy, having lunch and dinner together. Nice guy, but he's always trying to pump me, but he's cool about it."

"Johnny, it's not what you don't tell them guys that worries me," Jimmy said. "You've got to touch bases, go to Chicago and tell them what you're doing, let them know it's just fun and games."

"What the fuck," Johnny said. "I'm not saying anything. Why go there and get a lot of bullshit shoveled at me? Either way, I'm on their shit list. And that's something I've got to talk to you about. Somebody's got to shut Bomp's big yap. He's really trying to bury me. He's filling Spilotro's head full of bullshit, says I gave secret testimony to the grand jury in the Frontier case that turned Friedman into a witness against Tony Zerilli, Mike Polizzi, and Tony Giordano, which is plain, unadulterated bullshit. What's this fucking guy's problem?"

Jimmy decided it was time to tell Roselli. "Johnny, it goes back to when you got the gift shop at the Frontier. See, Bomp did some work for Detroit and he was expecting to get a piece of the Frontier. He thinks you fucked him out of it."

"Oh, Jimmy, what a treacherous world we live in. All I did is help Joe Breen get the gift shop and he was grateful enough to cut me in for a piece of it. So I net fifty, sixty grand a year out of it, big fucking deal."

Jimmy was still worried about the assassination committee. "The problem, Johnny, is that Chicago don't know what you're saying to the committee. Maybe Aiuppa and Batters figure if you talk to them, then you'd talk to grand juries. Don't forget, they've already started clipping guys close to Sam."

Roselli pondered this a moment, gazing out at the scenery as they drove. The wind was ruffling his hair, which seemed as light and silky as a baby's. That was what old age did to people, Jimmy thought, it turned them into babies again.

"Jimmy, let me think out loud for a minute. I'd like your reaction to this idea. You remember Joe Shimon, don't you? He was with us on the Castro plot, former Washington police inspector.

"We've talked about Sam's murder, the three of us were close, and he thinks Santo [Trafficante] made a deal with Castro. Remember when Santo was jailed and they grabbed his money when Castro came into power, then suddenly he was released with all his money? Shimon thinks he's a Castro agent spying on Cubans in Florida. Sam shared that suspicion. That's why Santo sat on his ass and did nothing with all that shit we gave him. He was probably reporting everything to Castro's agents, and Miami's full of them.

"I still see Santo, we have dinner or lunch every now and then. He thought his name would never surface in the hearings, which is stupid. But if he was playing both ends against the middle, he had plenty to worry about. Those Cubans, either side, would cut his balls off if they thought he double-crossed them. They don't give a shit about the Mafia down there. I remember Sam telling me when he got his subpoena. He said, 'Santo's shitting his pants, but you can't keep his name out of it. I introduced the guy to the CIA, for Christ's sake. Everybody knows it. Maheu, Shimon, you, the whole FBI and CIA. This Santo's crazy to think we can stop his name from surfacing.' "

"Don't let this cocksucker set you up," Jimmy said. "Watch yourself."

"Jimmy, right now my problem is Bomp. This guy's got telephonitis. Like with Santo, I've got no proof, but I've got a feeling about this prick. I think he's a snitch. Him and Dago Louie are in the same fucking boat."

"Johnny, don't worry about Bomp," Jimmy said, paus-